

Editorial

This issue of the *Journal of Business Systems, Governance and Ethics* has articles relating to business in Europe, Australia, Taiwan and Malaysia. It covers topics including the use of ICT by SMEs in Europe, Public Private Partnerships in Victoria, family support for expatriate members of multinational companies, financial reporting using the Internet, the impact of children on women's and men's paid and unpaid work, and leadership and ethnicity issues in public companies in Malaysia.

The first paper by Lorna Uden, from Staffordshire University is entitled: *How to Promote Competitive Advantages for SMEs: Issues, Ideas and Innovation*. In this article Uden notes that SMEs have increasingly been enjoying the benefits of e-business and that information and communications technologies (ICT) introduce both opportunities and threats to small to medium enterprises (SMEs). While SMEs have traditionally been restrained from international trade because of resource limitations ICT now enables them to present their products globally. Despite these benefits, however, uptake of e-business by SMEs is still quite low and there are many issues that need to be addressed before SMEs can be convinced to embrace ICT. This paper discusses issues, ideas and innovations important in helping SMEs to remain competitive.

An article by Nick Sciulli: *Public Private Partnerships: Identifying Practical Issues for an Accounting Research Agenda* then offers a structured framework for research into the accounting implications of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). Accounting principles are used to identify whether a PPP will lead to value for money, and a model is developed to define potential areas of investigation from which a series of research questions are posed. Sciulli argues that public sector managers need to be aware of the failures and the success stories of particular PPP projects so that lessons can be learned from these experiences.

The next article by Joy Lee on *Family Support as a Factor in Cultural Adjustment*, discusses how expatriates have become an important human resource to multinational operations. Following the growing worldwide competition and internationalisation of globe markets, international expatriate assignments have become essential to successful worldwide development for many multinational corporations, but to facilitate this, expatriates need to adjust to an overseas environment and multinational corporations need to recognise the need for expatriate family support. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between family support and cross-cultural adjustment of Taiwanese Bank expatriates assigned to America.

Tehmina Khan then reports on *Internet Financial Reporting: Disclosure about Companies on Websites*. Khan notes that the Internet has emerged as a medium of communication of financial reporting information by companies since the mid to late nineteen nineties, but that there are aspects of Internet based financial reporting that are quite different from traditional hard copy presentation. One problem is that there is a lack of uniformity of financial reporting disclosure between companies worldwide. Three aspects of financial reporting disclosure were investigated in this paper: fundamental reporting elements, corporate social responsibility reporting elements and corporate governance elements. Khan concludes that it is important for companies worldwide to adopt a uniform approach to financial reporting on the Internet in order for decision making by users to be a more informed process.

The next article, by Marty Grace: *Australian Women's and Men's Incomes by Age of Youngest Child*, examines how the responsibility for children impacts on women's and men's paid and unpaid work, and how paid and unpaid work impact on each other. Grace argues that aiming to allow men and women to care equally for their families, frames the issue as one of gender equality, but that sharing responsibility for children is also a matter of equity between parents and non-parents. This study presents a new way of looking at income data and highlights the need for further research into incomes following childbearing and the way that incomes vary between women and men, and with the age of the youngest child.

The final article is by Dominic Lai Yew Hock who investigates *Leadership and Ethnicity in Public Companies in Malaysia*. Corporate Governance gained prominence in Malaysia during the Asian financial crisis of 1997 and this provided an indication that existing corporate governance structures in public listed companies were insufficient. The article describes empirical research using Chinese controlled public listed companies in Malaysia. The results show that there has been widespread adoption of the leadership structure recommended under the Code by the sample companies, and that adoption of the prescribed leadership structure under the Code has no significant impact on the financial performance of the sample companies.

All papers in the journal have been subjected to a process of blind peer review by at least two reviewers. Articles were then only accepted after appropriate changes and corrections had been made by the authors. I hope that you find the content of this issue interesting.

Arthur Tatnall

Editor